

Grand chief calls for cooperation after derailment

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Mattagami First Nation faced with 'devastating incident,' says grand chief

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Harvey Yesno has called for a coordinated from Canadian National Railway and the federal and provincial governments following the second major train derailment near Mattagami First Nation in three weeks that has threatened the air and water quality of the community.

“The chief and council of Mattagami First Nation were already struggling to deal with the impacts of the first derailment and now they are faced with what appears to be an even more devastating incident,” said Yesno in a press release.

“This besieged community needs immediate resources to monitor the impacts of both of these disasters, and we are calling on CN Rail and the appropriate federal and provincial ministries and agencies to coordinate and cooperate with the community in all aspects of the emergency response and make all required resources available immediately,” he added.

On Saturday March 7, a CN crude oil train derailed about four kilometres southwest of Gogama, and near the Mattagami First Nation.

According to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, more than 30 cars carrying crude oil derailed and caught fire, creating thick black plumes of smoke.

The Sudbury and District Health Unit reported crude oil leaked into an adjacent waterway, Minisinakwa Lake.

The CN train reportedly passed through the centre of Gogama only minutes before it had derailed.

There were no injuries due to the derailment.

It was the fourth CN train derailment in Northern Ontario in 2015, and the second near Gogama in only three weeks.

On Feb. 14 a CN derailment released one million litres of crude oil about 37 kilometres from the site of the March 7 derailment.

In a press release Sunday, the Ontario Provincial Police said Highway 144 remains closed between Gogama and the watershed.

“The re-opening time is still undetermined,” the OPP said.

CN CEO Jim Vena said he apologizes to the near Gogama and Mattagami for “disruptions caused by second derailment in such a short time.”

CN said on Twitter Gogama's drinking water supply was not adversely impacted by the derailment.

But the Sudbury and District Health Unit said people who draw their water from Minisinakwa Lake should exercise caution.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada is investigating the derailment.